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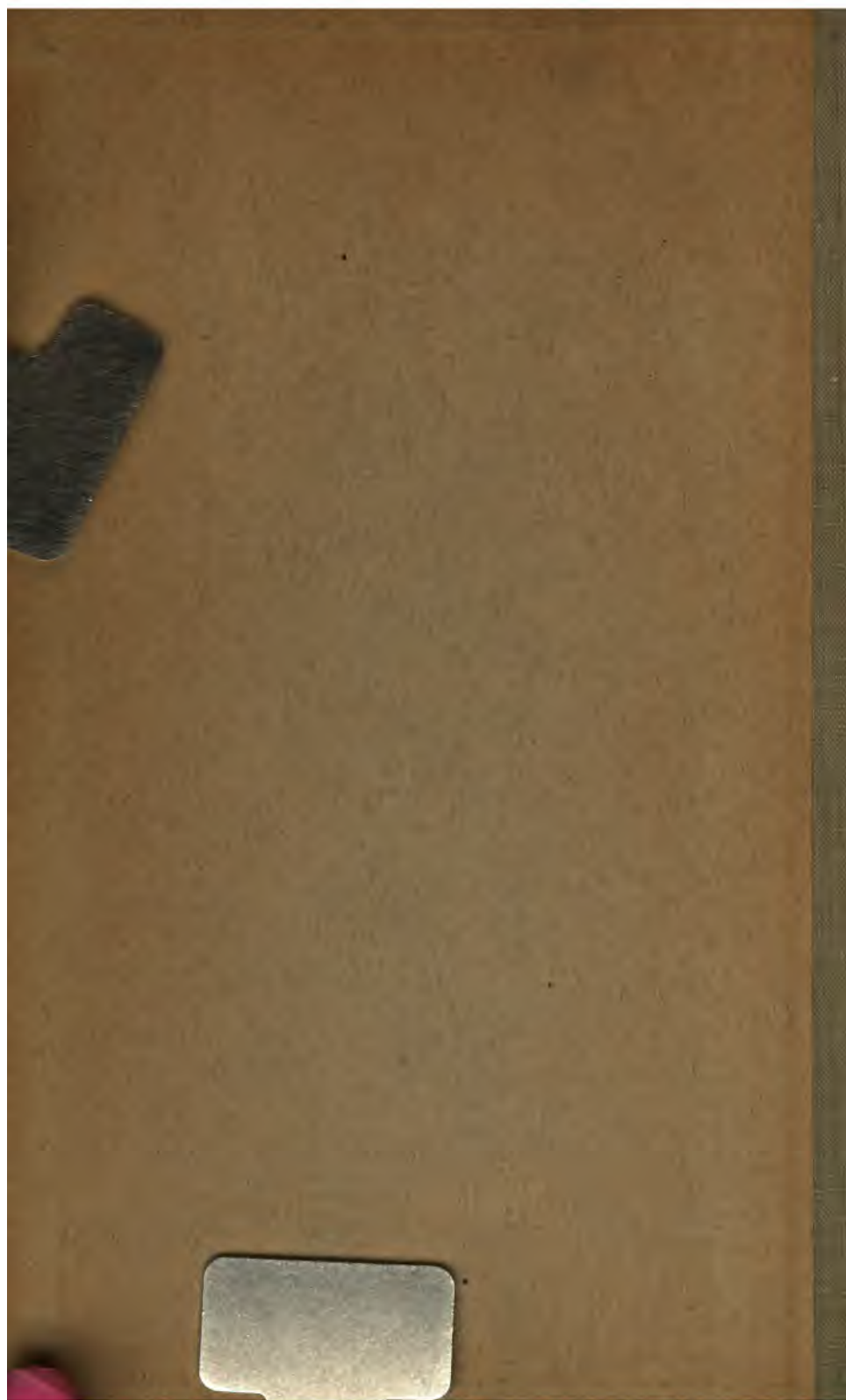
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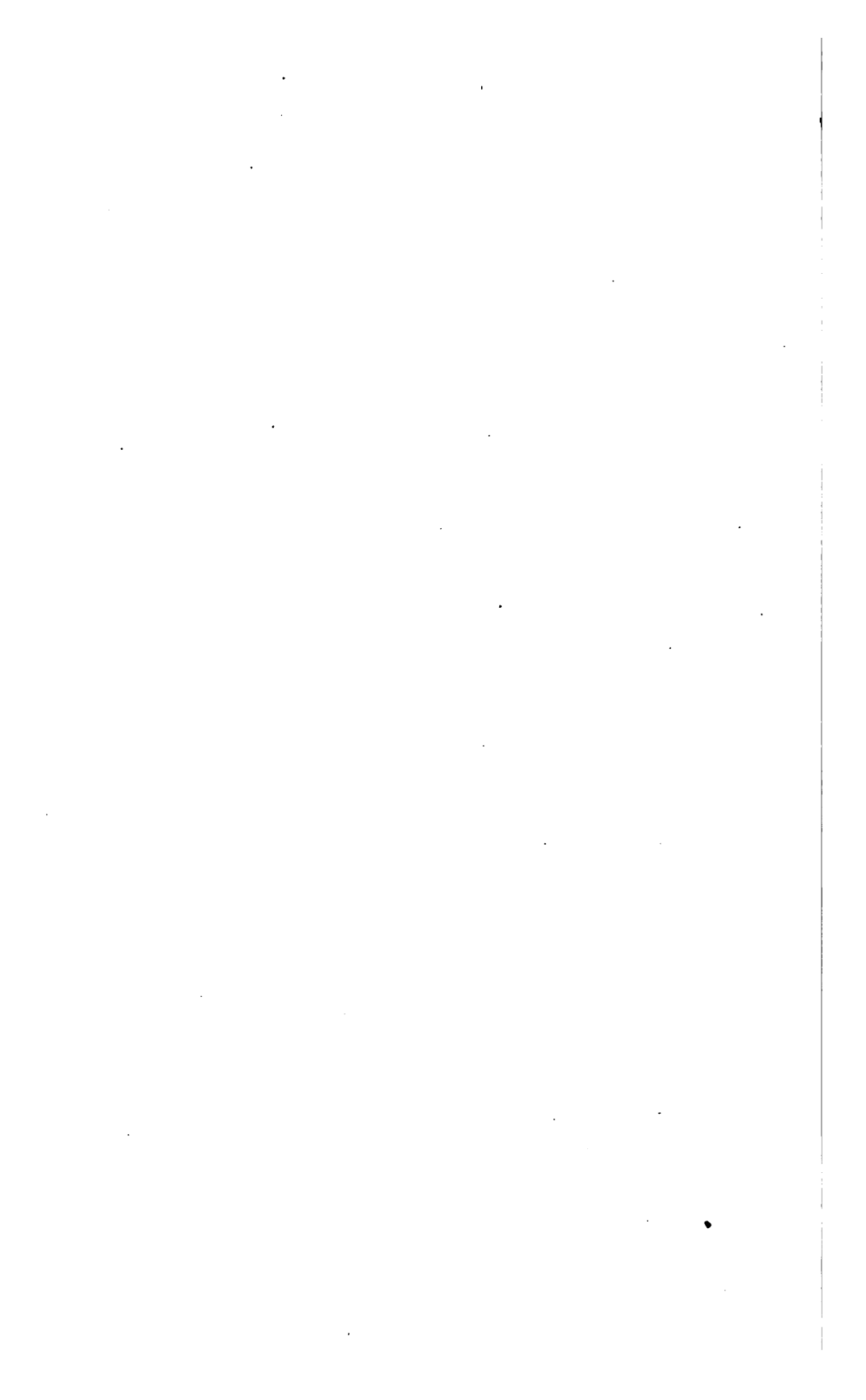
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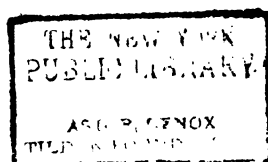


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ACCOUNT
OF
THE CONQUEST
OF
MAURITIUS.
WITH
~~Some Notices~~
ON
THE HISTORY, SOIL, PRODUCTS, DEFENCES,
AND THE
POLITICAL IMPORTANCE,
OF
THIS ISLAND.
TO WHICH IS ADDED, A
SKETCH,
EXPLANATORY OF THE MILITARY OPERATIONS.

BY
AN OFFICER,
WHO SERVED ON THE EXPEDITION.

"Policy foresees, that if the Isle of France were abandoned, the English would drive all foreign nations out of the seas of Asia, and would possess themselves of all the riches of these vast countries."
ABBE RAYNAL.

LONDON,
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TO

FIELD MARSHAL

HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS THE DUKE OF YORK,

Esq. Esq. Esq.

SIR,

I HERE present your Royal Highness with the narrative of a recent military success. The subject being possessed, I conceive, of sufficient interest, to be strictly accurate, and to convey an intelligible, unadorned relation of facts, has been my only ambition.

The encouragement invariably extended by your Royal Highness, to the most inconsiderable professional attempts, emboldens me to hope, that you may also view this little production in a favorable light, and receive it with your accustomed indulgence.

Wijkoff 30 July 1721

For the presumption of this address, I shall offer no apology, except that it is the natural expression of an obligation, which, in common with the whole military body, I feel that I am under, towards your Royal Highness, as the personage whose administration, out of imperfection and confusion, produced that complete military system, doubtless, so instrumental to the imposing aspect assumed by our armies, whether on the Indian or the Spanish peninsula, in either hemisphere, and almost through every quarter of the globe.

I have the honor to be,

With profound duty and respect,

Your Royal Highness's

Most obedient and devoted Servant,

THE AUTHOR.

ACCOUNT
OF
THE CONQUEST
OF THE
MAURITIUS.

THE event which forms the subject of the following sheets, was achieved, with less expenditure of blood, regarding the real as well as reputed strength of the enemy's position, than the most sanguine calculator would have ventured to predict. But military actions, which are performed with unhoped-for facility, seem not less, the instructive objects of enquiry and examination, than those, in whose execution, unforeseen difficulties have arisen.

The Mauritius has been long an object of solicitude to the French, the English, and the Anglo-Indian Governments ; and the latter has been frequently checked in its career of victory, by the depredations of naval adventurers ; by serious and repeated commercial losses ; and by the formidable political plans and combinations, emanating from this island.

The importance and magnitude of the acquisition, are so well known, that it would be needless here, to expatiate on them. The peculiar advantages it may possess, above other colonies, and its political relations, shall be touched on, in the sequel.

Suffice it, to observe, at present, that the fortunate result of this skilful enterprize, has placed a pearl in the Crown of Great Britain ; has been the cause of national congratulation ; and is one of those extensions

of empire, the policy of which is so obvious, that it admits of no discussion.

As the operations against the French isles filled a period of about eighteen months, the author will, as a preliminary, enumerate the heads of events from the establishment of a force at Roderigues to the debarkation on Mauritius.

A small body of Europeans, and Seapoys, under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Keating, embarked at Bombay, early in the year 1809. This detachment was destined to possess the Island of Roderigues*, in order to afford occasional aid to the

* The social principle which binds man to man is but ill exemplified in the Island of Roderigues. But two French families reside on it; and these (though lords of domains sufficiently ample to prevent, at least on the score of ambition, the cause of disputes) live as distinct, and entertain for each other full as much disgust and animosity as any belligerent potentates whatever.

blockading squadron off Port Louis ; and, by the proximity of its situation, to contribute generally, in straitening the enemy's quarters in the Isles of France and Bourbon.

In September of the same year, Colonel Keating, in conjunction with Capt. Rowley, of the navy, who had 1 ship of 64 guns, 3 frigates and 1 sloop, under his orders, sailed from Roderigues. On the 23d, the troops effected a landing within seven miles of St. Paul's, Isle of Bourbon. The enemy were driven from the town and batteries with rapidity ; we sustained scarcely any loss ; and an armistice of three days ensued.

The troops and seamen, being supplied with fresh provisions, were, at the stipulated period, re-imbarked for Roderigues, carrying with them the public stores found in the place. The French general (Des Bruslyes), chagrined with the result of this affair, or dreading the

severity of his superiors, took the desperate resolution of terminating his existence by suicide.

The ample information, acquired during many predatory attacks, by the naval and military commanders on this station, at length enabled the Government of India to concert measures towards the final reduction of the French islands.

Bengal, Madras, and Bombay, Ceylon and the Cape, were to furnish on this occasion, to the extent of their respective resources. A competent naval force was collected; and the expedition, it was hoped, would amount to about 16,000 men*, attended by a small proportion of cavalry, with a considerable train of light and heavy artillery; the grandest in all respects,

* Small detachments, part of the battering train, and several horses, were left behind, for want of transport conveyance.

whether in effective strength, discipline, or equipment, which has been afloat on the Indian seas.

A detachment of nearly 4000 men, half of which were natives, embarked at Madras, and arrived at Rodrigues on the 10th of June, 1810. This corps, placed under the command of Colonel Keating, was destined for the reduction of Bourbon.

The attack was made on different points; and, in consequence of a surf, which prevented the main body effecting a disembarkation at the time agreed on, Col. Frazer's division bore the brunt of the affair. The French shewed a comparatively superior line. Our troops, for a moment, being exposed to a fire of grape—trusting to the bayonet, and charged the enemy, and having killed many, put the remainder entirely to flight. Our total loss did not exceed 80 men. This

decided the fate of the Island of Bourbon, which surrendered on the 8th July.

The established gallantry of Colonel Keating speaks for itself; the promptitude and decision evinced by Colonel Frazer, in a trying moment, mark him as a meritorious officer; the instant success which crowned this service, was such as the boldness of its execution deserved; and the conduct of the troops employed on it, cannot be too highly applauded.

The tide of success no longer preserved its wonted course. It seemed determined that the expiring genius of Gallo-Indian power should emit one feeble ray, previous to its utter extinction. A coincidence of apparent almost providential accidents, at this period, protected the enemy, and even led him to partial victory over the unrivalled heroism, and even the superior numerical force of the British navy.

This arm of the state is peculiarly exposed to the chance of elements ; and often, in the moment of triumph, the caprice of the winds will snatch the rewards of valor from the victor's grasp.

Our losses followed each other in rapid succession ; their causes were purely accidental ; but we had suffered such in those seas for half a century.

Of the details of these events, the public is in possession. The peculiar fate of Captain Corbet, a brave officer, is much to be lamented ; the conduct of Capt. Pym, of the *Sirius*, in burning his ship, when no longer able to protect her, demands approbation ; and the gallant defence made by Captain Willoughby, of the *Nereide*, stands recorded in the archives of his country !

The French, for an instant, were masters of the sea ; they had even the audacity to form the blockade of St.

Denis. The activity and vigor of Commodore Rowley*, in three weeks, retrieved our naval superiority.

While these events occurred, a conspiracy was discovered to exist among some of the inhabitants of Bourbon; it was however suppressed by the seizure of the ringleaders, but no capital punishments were, I believe, inflicted.

The divisions to form the expedition, that of the

* General Abercrombie, while reconnoitring, was taken in the Ceylon frigate, by two of the enemy's ships, under Commodore Hamlin. That officer, aware of the proposed destination of the British commander, having made his compliments, somewhat ironically observed, that he presumed he would have the honor to introduce his prisoner, rather sooner than he had, perhaps, expected, to M. de Caen. In the course of a very few hours, however, the general was fortunately re-captured; when he politely thanked M. Hamlin for his kind intention of introduction, and now felt extremely happy to have it in his power to return the compliment, by introducing him to Commodore Rowley.

Cape excepted, were united at Roderigues on the 22d November, 1810, and on the same day the fleet weighed anchor, and sailed for its ultimate destination*.

On the 29th November, the fleet, consisting of 70 sail, (chiefly men of war and India-men) anchored in

* Shortly antecedent to this period, proclamations were sent on shore on various parts of the island, exhorting the people to estimate the advantages likely to be enjoyed as British subjects; pledging to them the freedom of religion, and the full execution of their own internal laws, and tendering the alternatives, that in case the inhabitants should join with the military force of the island during the ensuing contest, they would expose themselves to every hazard and severity of war; but if they remained quietly at their homes, their persons should be protected from molestation, and all private property religiously respected. In reply, M. de Caen is said to have addressed a letter to Mr. Farquhar, to the following effect: "That the attempt to seduce the subjects of his Imperial Majesty from their duty and allegiance could only be regarded as a violation of the law of nations and of war—the loyalty of that people was not to be shaken; and he only regretted that a sufficient number of those perfidious productions had not been landed, that he might have been enabled to use them as cartridge paper!"

the narrow passage formed by the island called Coin de Mire and the land. At this moment, about a league to westward, a grand explosion was perceived. It proved that the enemy, not desiring to wait our attack, on retiring from Fort Marlastiri, blew up a portion of its works.

To cover the landing, two brigs of war, drawing little water, anchored on the reef, within one hundred yards of the beach.

The boats containing the reserve, consisting of grenadiers and light infantry, collected outside the reef, and proceeded to the shore, with parade precision. Before the evening closed, 10,000 men, with three day's provisions, and their complement of guns, stores, and ammunition, had disembarked without accident or resistance.

At five o'clock, the army broke into columns of sections, advancing by the centre, through the road which traverses the wood in that direction. The whole led by the reserve, composed of the flank brigade, and two flank companies of the 59th, under Major Gen. Warde.

The column had not yet penetrated three hundred paces, when a desultory fire was commenced by the enemy's light troops. Several men were knocked down in the column ; but our troops, of a similar description, opposed them evidently with more correct effect.

They were overtaken while endeavouring to destroy a wooden bridge over the Seche. They had only, however, succeeded in raising the planks from the beams which supported them, and our troops filed over the beams without any other inconvenience.

The field pieces were taken down over the bed of the river, which, in the summer season, is practicable ; and, in half an hour, by the animated exertions of the sailors who dragged them, they regained their positions at the head of their respective brigades.

The enemy's line supported its left on the Pirebot, extending nearly parallel to the wood at the distance of two hundred paces from it, and reaching its left to a gentle eminence, on which were a planter's house and offices. It consisted of about 3,500 men, with four field pieces and a howitzer, under the command of General Vandersmars. The Captain General de Caen, with the chief part of his force, remained within the lines.

At Pirebot, there was a signal post, from whence every movement of our army could be discerned.

The skirmish of light troops continued, until the head of the column emerged from the wood, the enemy's line then gave a sort of confused volley, and during the unavoidable delay necessary to form those corps which had cleared the defile, the column in different parts, as it lay along the windings of the road, was exposed to a shower of grape, well directed, but generally too much elevated,

Those who were mounted, were consequently most exposed, and at this time, two field officers were killed* and one wounded.

The grenadiers of the 59th were the first formed, and having reserved their fire, and being supported successively by all the flank companies of the reserve, they rushed on to the charge. The enemy waited till our men arrived

* Colonel Campbell and Major O'Keefe, in whose honorable death the army has to lament the loss of two of its best officers.

within about fifty paces of them, when they broke and retired with precipitation. Leaving in our possession their field pieces and some tumbrels of ammunition. They were then seen, confused and scattered over the plain hastening to their lines.

A corps now ascended the Pirebot, and having taken down the French, hoisted on that post the English ensign. This afforded to the army, a moment of exultation—And the shouts which followed it, reverberated in cheering echoes through the adjacent hills.

When within about a mile of the French lines, and where the ground admitted it, the army deployed. This and some consequent movement of the corps, occupied at least an hour, during which the enemy, fired with little execution, from a battery of heavy ordnance and extensive command, on the right extremity of the lines.

From the intense heat of the weather, exhausted state of the troops, and lateness of the day, it was found impracticable to make the necessary arrangements for a general assault. The army retired about four hundred paces, but being still within range of the enemy's shot, took up a position some distance in the rear, with its left on the Pirebot.

In the night a party of marines joined the army. In those climates they are usually dressed in white and blue, and from the obscurity of objects, the similitude of dress caused them to be easily taken for French soldiers—the alarm of surprise spread through the ranks, several corps stood to their arms and some gave fire. By this unfortunate accident some lives were lost and many were wounded.

On the same night, the enemy's lines are said to have been disturbed by a false alarm, during which the

timidity and irresolution betrayed by the national guards, it is thought, had some influence in disposing General de Caen to capitulate.

On the 2d, we received a flag of truce at the outposts; the articles* which were deemed inadmissible will be seen in the appendix.

Arrangements were now in train for a general assault. The enemy however at an early hour, revised his propositions, yielded the most offensive articles, and a negociation was regularly opened; the termination of which was perhaps accelerated by the junction in the course of the day, of the Cape squadron with 2000 land troops on board. And at six in the morning

* A report was in circulation, that General de Caen proposed some arrangement in favor of a particular corps of his force, for whose security he urged that his word was pledged. The case of this corps seems not generally known, nor is the writer aware how its publicity would involve any good end.

of the 3d December* the grenadiers of the British army, marched into the *lines* and principal forts and batteries of Port Louis.

Our total loss did not exceed 300 men, and that of the enemy might have been about the same number.

A chief object was the preservation of the town. Had we assaulted and carried the lines, the further

* The English prisoners amounted to about 1,500. They were confined on board prison ships in the harbour, and kept for some months, previous to the attack, indiscriminately under hatches, were scantily victualled, and treated with unusual severity. On the 3d, the French officer on the guard of one of those ships, told the men to come up, that they were now at liberty, and that the arrack, some casks of which were on deck, was at their service. The prisoners presently got drunk, quarrelled with the French soldiers, wished to revenge all their former indignities, and threw one of them overboard—till at length a French frigate, moored alongside, was compelled to fire some rounds of grape upon them, which killed or wounded twelve, and drove the remainder below.

progress of the British army, into the town, must have depended on the nature of the opposition presented by the French troops. In that event, and if they had disputed their ground, in the rear of the lines, with any degree of pertinacity, to mark the period of halt, to a victorious soldiery, and to arrest the winter torrent descending from the hills, would seem attempts, perhaps, equally feasible.

Had terms been refused the garrison, by the exertion of its valor the glory of the army would have been enhanced ; but the loss likely to be sustained was without adequate equivalent.

The motives which dictated the conduct of General Abercrombie, were at once political and humane. By permitting a handful of veterans* to return to

* Part, if not all of them, served at Marengo, and (as the writer has understood) in all the Italian campaigns.

their native land, he secured an important conquest, without deterioration of its worth; avoided the hazard of events, which might in their consequences have been of very pernicious tendency; prevented the vain effusion of human blood; spared to his country the services of many brave and useful men; averted the horrors of a storm, in a town, from the construction of its houses peculiarly exposed to it; and, in fine, with trivial loss, accomplished every solid object of the armament entrusted to his command.

HISTORICAL EPOCHAS:

THE Portuguese have the merit of discovering those islands. This occurred in the year 1505. An era glorious to navigation, and memorable in the history of the world, for the extension of its known limits.

Mascaregnas called Bourbon after himself, and Mauritius Cerné, from the appellation of Cerna Ethiopia, given by Pliny to the Island of Madagascar.

In 1580, Philip the Second of Spain usurped the government of Portugal, and became possessed of all her Indian territories.

The Dutch having thrown off the yoke of Spain, and from subjects becoming sovereigns, in 1598 Admiral Van Neck landed on Cerné, and changed its name, after that of the Prince of Orange, to Mauritius.

The original settlers are conjectured to have been pirates, who are known to have infested the Indian seas during this century. The Dutch are believed to have settled on the island in 1644.

In 1657, the wreck of the French establishments of Madagascar sought a refuge in the Island of Mascaranas, which they thence denominated Bourbon.

Having become masters of the Cape of Good Hope in 1712, they abandoned Mauritius, which the French from Bourbon immediately occupied. They thence called it the Isle of France.

In 1735, M. de la Bourdonnaie arrived at Mauritius as governor-general of the two islands. And to him those beautiful colonies owe every thing.

He introduced, from St. Jago and the Brazils, the cultivation of the manioc* ; was the first to plant the sugar-cane, and establish manufactories of iron, cotton, and indigo.

In 1738, he built a ship of five hundred tons burthen, the first ever launched in Port Louis.

He also constructed roads, built bridges, magazines, hospitals, arsenals, batteries, fortifications, and barracks, as well as mills, quays, offices, shops, canals, and aqueducts. The aqueduct in the Isle of France, which

* The food of the slaves, and the frequent preservation of the colony from famine.

conveys fresh water to the port and hospitals, is six thousand yards in length*.

In 1746, by incredible exertions, M. de la Bourdonnaie formed an expedition against the British Indian trade. On the 6th July, he engaged the English fleet off the coast of Coromandel; and on the 21st September, Madras surrendered to him by capitulation.

Finally, he assumed the government of a settlement, full of wretchedness and disorder, without industry or resources. He left it in a state of comparative prosperity and splendor; and considered, therefore, as the founder and the legislator of an infant colony, his labours have entitled him to the acknowledgements of

* Nor is it unworthy of remark, that he accommodated all disputes by his own amiable interposition; and there was but one law-suit in the Isle of France during the twelve years of his government.

every grateful and benevolent mind, and distinguish his memory in the recording pages of history, with pure and unfading lustre.

And whether he be regarded as a general, a statesman, or an admiral ; an administrator, agriculturist, or merchant ; in all those various, and almost incompatible capacities, he grounds an equal claim to the meed of posterity. Ever leading by his example, and always persuading rather than compelling, he was in each respect the friend and the benefactor of those who were subject to his rule ; he exercised a zeal which surmounts all obstacles, and possessed a genius suited to every exigency—overcoming indifference and opposition, he promoted, almost created commerce ; and with feeble means, he upheld the glory of the French arms, with dignity and effect ; and having devoted a life of activity to the service of his sovereign and of his country—he he fell, like Lally, a victim to the relentless fury of a

faction ; and, loaded with irons and unmerited reproach, expired in a dungeon of the bastille.

In delineating the principal features of the life of M. de la Bourdonnaie, the author has, perhaps, deviated from the brevity which he ought to have observed ; but he feels there is a more than common tribute due on the occasion, as whatever exists, at this day, in those islands, whether of public or private utility, may be considered as originating from that celebrated character.

In July 1748, an English fleet, of twenty-eight ships of war, commanded by Admiral Boscawen, anchored within cannon-shot of Port Louis. On the next morning, however, that commander increased his distance, the French having thrown some shells at his nearest vessels. On the 6th day, (by the enemy's account) he maintained a warm cannonade (without the least return) against a large heap of faggots, which he took for a

masked battery ; and, during the night, made demonstrations of debarkation, at La Petite Riviere, eight miles west of the port. The enemy, watching our motions, hastened to the spot with some light pieces of artillery, and having fired on the boats, directed that drums should beat a march, so as to indicate the approach of troops from various directions ; and thus was Admiral Boscawen deceived as to the force and preparations of the enemy ; and the next day, relinquishing his attempt, sailed from the island.

During the whole of the American war, the Mauritius afforded most signal aid to Admiral Suffrein and the French squadrons in the eastern seas:

In 1790, during the government of General Conway, this colony obeyed that overwhelming impulse of revolution with which the political world was then about to be inundated ; and, forming themselves into a primary assembly, established certain constituted authorities after the

example of France. M.de Macnamara, commandant of French marine, exerted himself in the royal cause, which so exasperated the prevailing party, that he was murdered by the grenadiers of the garrison, while conveying him to prison. The inhabitants (says the Viscount de Vaux) were distressed and humiliated at seeing their country, till then unspotted with any crime, stained with such a bloody outrage. It was, however, the only one that happened during the whole course of the revolution ; whilst France itself, and all its other colonies, have been deluged with the blood of so many victims to the fury of democracy.

In 1793, a jacobin club was established, entitled the Chaumiere. The members of which compelled the Count de Malartie, governor-general, to dispatch a vessel, with one of their detachments of a hundred men, to arrest Vigoureaux, governor of Bourbon : which was accordingly executed. The colonial assembly checked

this club in its sanguinary disposition ; and on the fall of Robespierre, altogether suppressed it : when thirty of the principal jacobins being arrested, were sent to France.

In the year 1795, orders arrived to execute the decree of abolishing slavery, which, the whole colony (shocked with the frightful picture presented in its development at St. Domingo) unanimously resolved to disobey.

In 1797, the colonial assembly, (as it had already done with respect to the agents of the Directory,) sent away to Batavia 800 soldiers, who had given themselves up to licentiousness with the negro women, and formed a plan to effect their freedom.

In 1798, an embassy from Tippoo Sultaun arrived at Mauritius. The object of which was an alliance, of a menacing and formidable nature, between the French

Republic and a coalition of Indian powers, hostile to the British possessions in that peninsula ; originating from "an ardent desire (in the very words of the ambassador) to expel the English from India ;" which might possibly have been effected, had not the consummate wisdom and sound policy of Marquis Wellesley, signally displayed at Hydrabad and Seringapatam, discomfited all their measures.

During this year, the colony again freed itself by an effort, at once bold and prudent, of the 107th and 108th regiments, (about 1000 strong) who had renewed the project, which their comrades had conceived, of emancipating the female slaves.

In 1799, the colonial committee resolved that the assembly should be limited to twenty-one members, fourteen for the county, and seven for the town ; to be elected by the primary assemblies of each canton ; and

whose decrees, sanctioned by the captain-general, became law : and such, it is understood, has been the definitive state of the municipal government of the Isle of France.

In 1810, the squadrons of Mauritius captured six English frigates, three India-men, the Isle of Passe, and about 1,200 land troops; and, in December of the same year, surrendered with its dependencies to the British arms.

MILITARY DEFENCES.

MAURITIUS has sometimes received the appellation of the Gibraltar of the east, and has been always considered possessed of extraordinary means of defence. It is very strong, and capable of being placed (which I have no doubt it will be) in a state of perfect security.

But it has been the policy of France to exaggerate the idea of its strength, in order, it would appear, to deter the English from their long meditated attack. And, through the love of the marvellous, and ignorance in military affairs, of the naval and literary

men, who have visited the island, this vaunted character of impregnability obtained currency.

So far, however, report has been strictly correct. The port and town are abundantly armed against naval insult of any description.

The external defences considered, the shoals of coral which surround the Mauritius, and the woods which line its shores, have been regarded as the natural barriers and bulwarks of the island. The former, to any extent, are incapable of practicable improvement; the latter, especially in their present decreased state, present an excellent field for the exertions of art.

Those shoals (on which the French placed so much dependance) are broken in a variety of places by the mouths of deep rivers. And even if they were not so, if the Author may presume to judge, from his own narrow

experience, would be disposed to think that almost an anomaly in nature, which offered an hundred miles extent of coast, without presenting, in favorable weather, many feasible points of debarkation.

In their instructions to governors, fifty years back, the ministry of France strongly recommended a careful preservation of the woods, particularly on the open flanks of the town of Port Louis.

The port is approached from the north-east. You are therefore exposed to the whole fire of the Island of Tonnelliers, armed with about sixty mortars and pieces of large calibre, with furnaces for heating shot; and, in fact, amply provided with every requisite implement of war. When arrived in front of the port, a cross fire is effected from Port Blanc, mounting about thirty-five guns, besides a new mortar battery lately executed. The navigable channel of entrance is about a mile and

a quarter in length, and two hundred and fifty yards in breadth. During the attack the gorge of this was closed by a chain of great strength, vessels were sunk to contract the passage, and inside, as a further security, four frigates were placed head and stern, strongly moored, filling the whole interval, and whose broadsides presented a battery of more than eighty guns. There was also detached works along the shore.

The principal batteries have ramparts of twenty-five and thirty feet, (or treble this when the nature of the materials require it) and parapets of eight feet high. The guns are worked *en-barbette*, on lofty traversing carriages. The reefs prevent an approach within grape range. You would be forced to pursue the tedious process of dismounting the guns of works which cannot be enfiladed, and, during the whole operation, be exposed to the fire of about one hundred and ninety pieces of artillery.

Thus Port Louis is almost inaccessible by sea.

The hills form a segment of a circle in the rear of the town, a line of at least two miles. M. de la Bourdonnais projected a sort of citadel near La Pouce, for the garrison to retire to in the last extremity. It would have been almost impregnable, but was never executed. The most accessible parts should be defended by breast works and abbatiss. With sufficient precaution, and without a heavy expence, this line might be made very respectable. The chief defects of it seem to be its great extent and difficulty of communication:

The *lines* on the eastern side, reaching from the hills to the sea, are in a tolerable state of repair. The ditch is about twelve feet wide, and the parapets about eight feet in depth. They are not armed with many guns; they want more flanks, and are utterly deficient in connexion with and support from the hills.

The *lines* on the western side have been permitted to fall into ruin. This is an important side, and easily defended. The French depended here on the batteries of Grand River, which was well enough, if the assailants advanced along the shore; but coming from the interior, and skirting the mountain Decouverte, it is at present quite defenceless.

The houses being constructed of wood, the streets of the town cannot be defended; and, (exclusive of the use of fire, which an assailant might resort to with ease and certainty) a musket bullet would inflict death in the deepest retirements and inmost recesses of these mansions.

In the hands of a zealous commander, the population (probably much exceeding 100,000) was a capital resource. On this, perhaps, it would not be wise in us to calculate. Colonel Keating, however, has risen a corps

at Bourbon ; the policy of which, it has been said, was not fully approved by Gen. Abercrombie : and to persons unacquainted with the motives which dictated the measure, it might appear questionable, how men who have been so recently in arms against us, can, with any colour of prudence, be so immediately entrusted with the same weapons in our defence

From the procrastination (however unaccountable) apparent in the execution of our designs upon this colony, influenced also by the crippled state of their navy, and the dangers of so long a voyage, the French Rulers perhaps calculated that (imminent as its danger was) it would yet escape us, as it had done for so many years, and though an highly esteemed post neglected to succour it. The affairs of Bourbon, however, recalled them to a sense of the approaching catastrophe, and a reinforcement is reported to have been dispatched with some frigates, accompanied by an order to recal the Captain-

General de Caen ; the troops, if they ever arrive, will of course arrive too late, and the recal of the captain-general (if such there was) General Abercrombie has anticipated.

M. de Caen has the reputation of having served with great distinction under General Moreau, in the celebrated retreat of the Black Forest ; and is considered as on the first list of French generals. His military talents, however, as displayed on the Isle of France, did not reveal (at least to his enemies) any of those characteristics which distinguish the active, the vigilant, or the accomplished, commander. That his finances were not in a flourishing state will be admitted ; but, it is supposed, that in exigency he might have used an unlimited sway over the personal services of the inhabitants, and over the general resources of the colony.

His regular force, including disciplined sailors, upon whose firmness and devotedness he could depend, amounted to about 2,500. With them he had 6000 national guards. He had ample time of preparation, and he might have met us with 10,000 Europeans and 10,000 chosen Blacks; The natives of Madagascar are, from infancy, trained to war, muscular, and said to be endowed with inflexible courage. These behind walls, and with the knowledge and possession of the passes of the country, should have rendered it a very sanguinary contest.

The roads into the town, which are few in number, should have been broken up, and defended at proper places by slight works, the banks of the ravines occupied and strengthened, the bridges destroyed, and the woods through which the roads passed should have been intersected in various places by abbatis. The moment our ships came to anchor, of which he had

instant intelligence by telegraph, had he dispatched a small corps with some light guns, in that direction, it might have disturbed us at night in the wood, with immense advantage.

He seems to have laboured under the delusion, that the attack was to be expected exclusively on the port ; he therefore added some works to the sea-side, which was already powerfully strong, and omitted to improve the works on the land-side, which were eminently deficient ; and thus violated a grand maxim in war—*equality of defence.*

In treating on the military defence of the Mauritius, it has appeared natural and necessary to touch upon the line of conduct adopted by an officer so lately charged with that duty.

SOIL, CLIMATE, AND PRODUCTIONS.

It is the general opinion, that this island has undergone some violent shocks, and that the deep ravines and vast rocks which present themselves, are the effects of volcanic convulsion. “Volcanoes, however, (says the academician M. le Gentil) never fail to leave traces of their ravaging power; such as calcined and mettled stones, pumice stones, lavas, cinders, &c. ; but none of these are to be seen in the Isle of France.” On the other hand, M. de Cossigny is of opinion, that “the soil is formed from the ruins of a volcano, at a very remote period. Lava is to be met with almost every where; and I had, on my estate, a bed of volcanic

ashes." These accounts are not easily reconciled ; and the author submits the subject to those more competent to discuss it.

Stones, from a pound to a ton weight, appear scattered over the face of the country. The soil is of a reddish colour, and mixed with ferruginous matter, and though apparently dry, is very fertile when cultivated, abundantly productive when manured, its cultivation does not require extraordinary labor, and the lands, even now, yield a much larger proportion of annual produce than those of France.

There are about sixty rivers or rivulets, of various sizes ; some of which, however, much decrease in the dry season. There are also several lakes in the interior and among the woods, where they retain their water.

Port Louis contains about six thousand houses ; they are chiefly constructed of wood, and seldom rise above two stories. The outer-sides of them are painted, and kept in the cleanest order ; inside they are carefully ornamented in a style approaching to Parisian taste and elegance. Many have gardens adjoining, and frequently you are delighted with the sight of woodbines and shrubs of aromatic odor, hanging over the windows, and gently entwining the airy structures which support them. The principal streets are straight, broad, and shaded by rows of lofty trees. The town resembles an amphitheatre, being situated in a valley, opening to the sea on one side, and on the other surrounded by a grand range of mountains, whose declivities are diversified with rugged and broken precipices ; at intervals, limpid streams gush forth and fall down the rocks: the rich foliage of the woods crown their summits.

The inhabitants receive foreigners with the utmost

politeness and hospitality. Many of them are of the antient noblesse families, who, being weary of the scenes exhibited in their native country, have sought shelter and repose in this agreeable retreat. A great deal of cordiality and mutual and unaffected kindness exist in their society. The visiting hour is about eight o'clock in the evening, and you take your leave at ten, unless invited to stay for supper. The supposed reigning vice is gallantry. And both sexes are passionately fond of dancing, an exercise in which they excel. The men are well made, and the number of elegant females is surprising; they are remarkably handsome, have a great deal of wit and vivacity, and are very engaging in their manners.

Here the longest and shortest days of the year differ only an hour.

Disease is hardly known in the Isle of France, and

the climate is uncommonly wholesome and temperate *.

A clear sky and fine scenery, rendered still more agreeable by the salubrity and softness of the air, all contribute to that affability and social cheerfulness so prevalent among the inhabitants. It is said, on approaching the land, when the wind is not violent, the air is embalmed with the perfumes of flowers, with which the trees of the island are covered †.

* It is a remarkable fact, that sharks, which cause sea-bathing to be so dangerous in other tropical climates, are here quite innoxious.

† In the picturesque language of St. Pierre, "there are ebonyes and cinnamon, with others of various name and figure, enriched and varied by tufts of palms, which rise above the rest, and whose tops, resting as it were, upon the summit of the wood, give the appearance of one forest resting upon another. The creeping plants, of divers kinds, form alternately arcades of flowers, and curtains of verdure. The groves dispense their aromatic odour; and, in the season of their flowers, the passenger bears on his garments their delightful perfume, long after he has quitted the shade of the trees on which they blow. At

Of the landscape scenery of the interior, as well as of the pastoral simplicity of the earlier inhabitants, the reader will be presented with a pleasing and minutely accurate picture in the admired story of Paul and Virginia:

Scientific and patriotic men have laboured to enhance the charms of this favored spot, by the introduction of all the choicest fruit trees, plants, and vegetables, which are cultivated in the most distant climes and regions of the globe.

Among the various species of trees which compôse

the close of summer, several kinds of foreign birds arrive, by an incomprehensible instinct, from distant and unknown regions, and over a vast extent of ocean, to collect the grain which is yielded by the vegetables of this island, while they enliven, by the splendor of their plumage, the foliage of the trees, which are embrowned by the sun."

the groves and forests of this island, may be enumerated those of cinnamon, pepper, fig, ebony, cocoa, almond, lemon, nutmeg, bamboo, latanier, manglier, palm, and sandal wood ; to which should be added the fouraba, (whose timber is admirably adapted to all the purposes of ship building) the pine, the fir, and the oak.

Among the fruit trees are included generally all those of tropical countries, and many of those of Europe. Grapes are in abundance and perfection ; the ananas, the finest of fruits, is known here, as well as strawberries, cherries, apricots, apples, mulberries, pears, medlars, and olives.

The chief plants are as follow :

The *manioc*, whose root is as large as a man's arm ; when grated it is made into cakes ; three pounds of it are given to each negro for his daily food.

The *minise*, an Indian corn, is a valuable and productive grain.

Wheat flourishes, and its flour is preferable to that of Europe for long voyages.

Rice is cultivated with success.

Oats and small *millet* succeed well.

The negroes grow *tobacco* for their own consumption.

Trefoil, *flax*, *hemp*, and *hops*, have been tried, but not yet succeeded.

The commercial products are cotton, coffee, indigo, iron, ambergris, nutmeg, sugar, and cloves. The iron ore has not been worked for some years, in consequence of its excessive consumption of wood for fuel: it has

also been undersold by that of Europe, though said to be of superior quality. Improvements in agriculture, and increase of population, must form the ground-works of the prosperity of this colony.

DESULTORY REMARKS.

THE political importance, various relations, and valuable properties peculiar to the Mauritius, have exercised, at different periods, the pens of eminent politicians, philosophers, and historians *.

An estimate of the loss, through the 'privateers and cruizers of Mauritius, sustained within a few years by

* Raynal, Grant Cossigny, Le Gentil, St. Pierre, Poivre, Kempelfelt, De la Haye, De la Caille, Rochon, Brunel, &c.

the Company and by the private trade of India, would amount to many millions sterling. In ten months preceding the fall of the Isle of France, it has been calculated that the insurance offices of Bengal alone were losers three millions sterling by capture.

Many English merchants will settle here; and the French, many of whom have considerable means, may be expected to speculate with ardor and vivacity. The anxious question, in all their societies, related to the probability of a Company's government; the nature of which they seemed quite aware of. Had this dreaded event taken place, the restrictions and monopolies of the Company would effectually have paralyzed all the efforts of industry; and, instead of being a channel of trade open to the community, a benefit attainable by all, a national good, the fruits of these

oppressions, the whole annual produce of this little territory, would only have been swallowed up by half a dozen proud, indolent, pampered, and rapacious civilians, the sons, nephews, or cousins of East India Directors.


The designs of Buonaparte, respecting our Indian possessions, are manifest—from his Egyptian expedition,—from his encouragement of oriental learning in Paris,—from his embassy and emissaries in Persia. As, however, three great powers (the Russian, Persian, and Turkish empires) will be immediately and deeply involved in the event, the success of such an enterprise must depend upon contingencies of extreme precariousness. And, perhaps, even the destinies of Indostan may be affected, as will certainly those of many other various and distant regions be governed, by

the affairs of the Spanish peninsula; and it may be decided on the Tagus and the Ebro, or on the summits of the Pyrennees, whether the verdant and fruitful banks of the Indus and of the Ganges, shall be deluged with the blood of their innocent inhabitants, and desolated by the trained plunderers of France. That these designs are agitated, and should therefore be provided for, has been the decided opinion of several able statesmen and diplomatists, who have devoted their attention to the subject, and who are doubtless masters of it. But be the possibility of success as it may, we have wrested from him a most convenient and serviceable auxiliary, should he attempt the execution of his designs.



By the reefs and banks of coral, (a sort of adamantine defence) which nearly encircle the shores of Mauritius; its noble forests, formed at once to adorn and

protect its coast ; by its batteries, fortifications, and works of art ; its secure and magnificent harbours ; delightful climate ; fertile soil ; valuable products ; and position in the centre of the eastern seas ; in the hands of a great maritime power, it seems destined to be a great military and naval place of arms ; a great commercial entrepost ; and to possess a consequent material influence at once over the trade of India, of Europe, and of America, and over all the riches of the vast countries which surround it.



The conquest of Mauritius has taught the nations of India another lesson of the invincibility of our arms in the east. In a short time, Frenchmen, it may be hoped, will be known to them but by the memory of their defeats. The name of the common enemy is now

I

erased from the map of these countries ; we have struck the death-blow to his colonial system, and, in the same act, supplied a vacant link in the great chain which binds the eastern to the western empire.

FINIS.

Appendix.

TERMS OF CAPITULATION.

WE, the undersigned, Major-General Henry Warde, and Commodore Josias Rowley, nominated on the part of His Britannic Majesty, by Vice-Admiral Albemarle Bertie, Commander in Chief of his Majesty's ships and vessels employed at the Cape of Good Hope, and the seas adjacent, and Lieutenant-General the Honorable John Abercromby, Commander of his Britannic

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Majesty's forces, on the one part ; and Martin Vandermaesen, General of Division, Member of the Legion of Honour, and Commandant of the troops of his Imperial and Royal Majesty the Emperor of France, at the Isle of France, and Mr. Victor Duprere, Capitaine de Vaisseau of his Imperial and Royal Majesty, nominated on the part of Charles de Caen, Grand Officer of the Legion of Honour, General of Division, Captain-Gen. of the French Settlements to the eastward of the Cape of Good Hope on the other part ; being severally and respectively armed with full powers to settle a Treaty for the Capitulation and Surrender of the Isle of France, and all its Dependencies, to the arms of his Britannic Majesty, do agree as follows :

Art. I.—The troops of his Imperial and Royal Majesty the Emperor of France, forming the garrison of the Isle of France, the Officers and Non-Commissioned Officers ; the officers of the Imperial and Royal Marine,

and the Crews of the ships of war, shall not be considered as prisoners of war, neither the Civil Authorities.

Answer.—The land and sea forces, officers, subalterns, and privates, shall not be considered as prisoners of war.

Art. II.—The troops of his Imperial and Royal Majesty shall retain their arms and colours, without ammunition, and all their personal effects and baggage, to the extent of that which, upon honour, shall be declared private property.

Answer.—They shall take away their effects and baggage.

Art. III.—The troops of his Imperial and Royal Majesty, and the crews of the ships of the Imperial and Royal Marine, shall be sent, with their families, to a port in European France.

Answer.—They shall be conveyed, together with their families, to a port in the French Empire.

Art. IV.—For the above conveyance, I shall keep the four Imperial frigates, *La Manche*, *La Bellone*, *L'Astree*, and *La Minerve*, as well as the *Victor* and *Entreprenante* corvettes, with their officers, crews, guns, stores, and provisions.

Answer.—Altogether inadmissible. The crews of the ships of war of the Imperial and Royal Marine are provided for by the preceding Article.

Art. V.—To the above ships shall be added six transport vessels, to be selected by me, for our conveyance, with the necessary provisions for the crews and passengers.

Answer.—Proper vessels shall be forthwith equipped as cartels, at the expence of the British Government,

provisioned and stored to convey the French garrison and the crews of the ships of war, to European France. The same vessels to be at liberty to proceed to any port of England without delay.

Art. VI.—These conditions being agreed to, I shall give up the Colony and all its Dependencies, the magazines, &c. Inventories shall be taken of all the articles belonging to the Emperor, and to be preserved for him and restored at a peace.

Answer.—The Colony and its dependencies shall be ceded unconditionally ; no power being vested in the parties contracting to determine its future destination. Inventories shall be taken by Commissioners, to be appointed on behalf of the contracting parties, of all public magazines and stores, which shall be given up to the Forces of his Britannic Majesty in their actual state, and without deterioration.

Art. VII.—The property of the Inhabitants shall be respected.

Answer.—All private property shall be respected.

Art. VIII.—The inhabitants shall preserve their religion, laws, and customs.

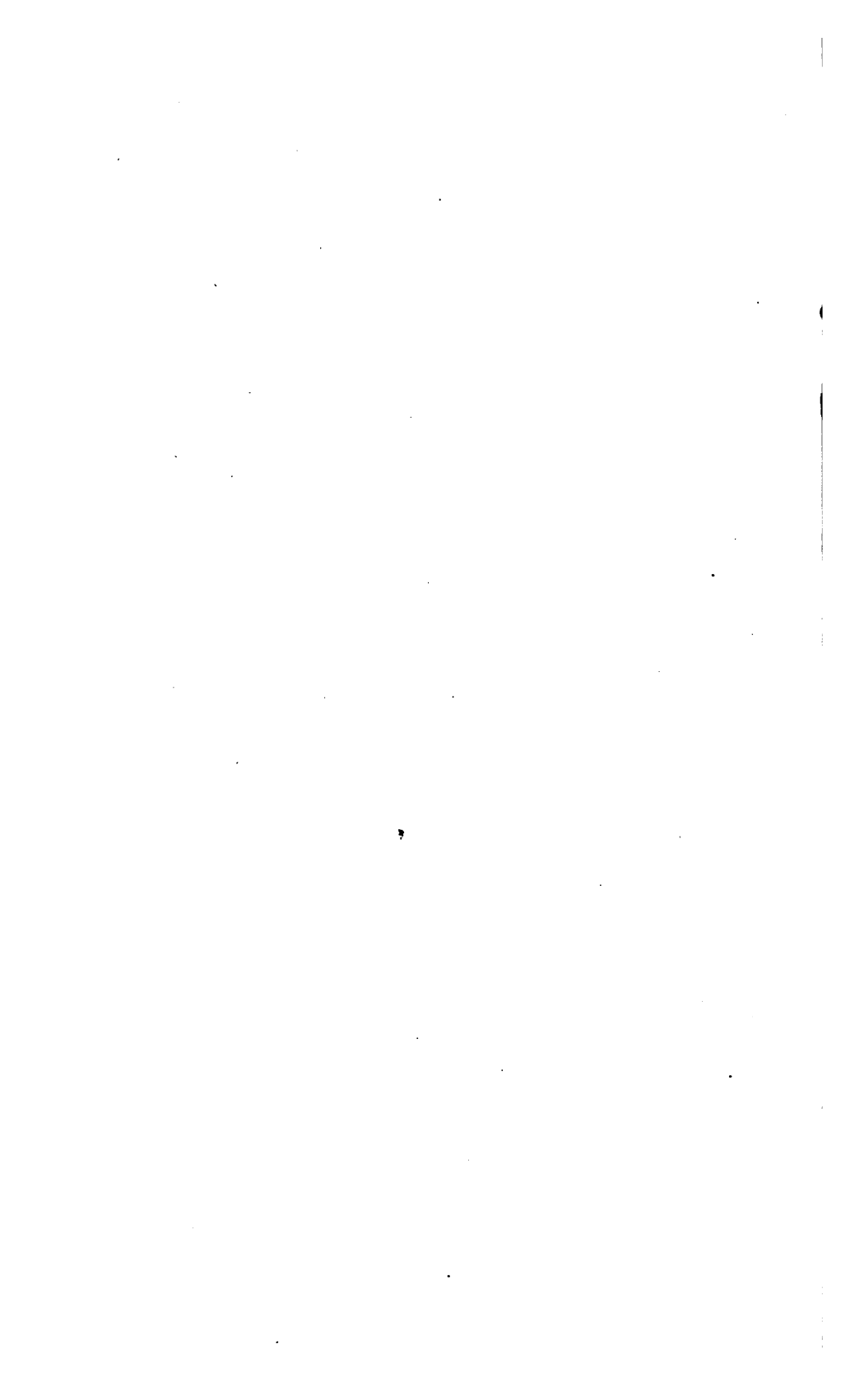
Answer.—The inhabitants shall preserve their religion, laws, and customs.

Art. IX.—The Colonists shall have the option, during two years to come, to quit the colony with their respective private property.

Answer.—They shall enjoy during two years, the liberty of quitting the colony with their property, in order to proceed to any place they may wish.

Art. X.—The wounded or sick that it shall be necessary to leave in the Hospitals shall be treated the same as the Subjects of his Britannic Majesty ; French Surgeons shall be permitted to remain with them, and they shall afterwards be sent to France at the expence of the British Government.

Answer.—The wounded who may be left in the Hospitals shall be treated in the same manner as the subjects of his Britannic Majesty.



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